



PCT/GB 2003 / 0 0 3 2 4 4



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

PRIORITY DOCUMENT

SUBMITTED OR TRANSMITTED IN
COMPLIANCE WITH RULE 17.1(a) OR (b)

The Patent Office

Concept House

Cardiff Road

Newport

South Wales

NP10 8QQ

REC'D 31 OCT 2003

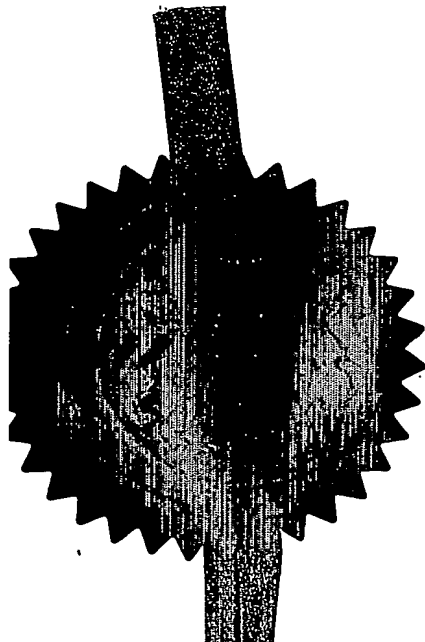
WIPO

I, the undersigned, being an officer duly authorised in accordance with Section 74(1) and (4) of the Deregulation & Contracting Out Act 1994, to sign and issue certificates on behalf of the Comptroller-General, hereby certify that annexed hereto is a true copy of the documents as originally filed in connection with the patent application identified therein.

In accordance with the Patents (Companies Re-registration) Rules 1982, if a company named in this certificate and any accompanying documents has re-registered under the Companies Act 1980 with the same name as that with which it was registered immediately before re-registration save for the substitution as, or inclusion as, the last part of the name of the words "public limited company" or their equivalents in Welsh, references to the name of the company in this certificate and any accompanying documents shall be treated as references to the name with which it is so re-registered.

In accordance with the rules, the words "public limited company" may be replaced by p.l.c., plc, P.L.C. or PLC.

Re-registration under the Companies Act does not constitute a new legal entity but merely subjects the company to certain additional company law rules.

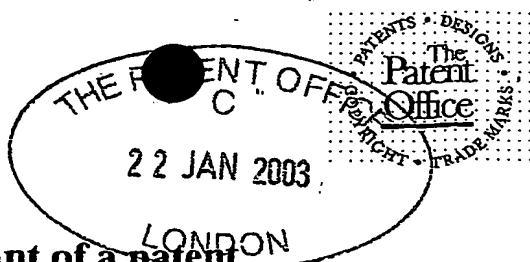


Signed *Andrew Gensey*
Dated 2 September 2003

An Executive Agency of the Department of Trade and Industry

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

Patent (Rule) 1977



1/77
23JAN03 E777176-1 D10103
P01/7700 0.00-0301480.0

Request for grant of a patent

(See the notes on the back of this form. You can also get an explanatory leaflet from the Patent Office to help you fill in this form)

22 JAN 2003

The Patent Office

Cardiff Road
Newport
South Wales
NP10 8QQ

1. Your reference P0172-GB02

2. Patent application number
(The Patent Office will fill in this part) 0301480.0

3. Full name, address and postcode of the or of each applicant (underline all surnames) OXFORD GLYCOSCIENCES (UK) LTD
THE FORUM
86 MILTON PARK
ABINGDON, OXON OX14 4RY
UNITED KINGDOM

Patents ADP number (if you know it)

7112386002 ✓

If the applicant is a corporate body, give the country/state of its incorporation

ENGLAND AND WALES

4. Title of the invention

NOVEL COMPOUNDS

5. Name of your agent (if you have one)

BLAKEY, ALISON JANE
OXFORD GLYCOSCIENCES (UK) LTD
THE FORUM
86 MILTON PARK
ABINGDON, OXON OX14 4RY
UNITED KINGDOM

"Address for service" in the United Kingdom to which all correspondence should be sent (including the postcode)

Patents ADP number (if you know it)

7112386002

6. If you are declaring priority from one or more earlier patent applications, give the country and the date of filing of the or of each of these earlier applications and (if you know it) the or each application number	Country	Priority application number (if you know it)	Date of filing (day / month / year)

7. If this application is divided or otherwise derived from an earlier UK application, give the number and the filing date of the earlier application	Number of earlier application	Date of filing (day / month / year)

8. Is a statement of inventorship and of right to grant of a patent required in support of this request? (Answer 'Yes' if:

YES

- a) any applicant named in part 3 is not an inventor, or
 - b) there is an inventor who is not named as an applicant, or
 - c) any named applicant is a corporate body.
- See note (d))

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

Patents Form 1/77

9. Enter the number of sheets for any of the following items you are filing with this form.
Do not count copies of the same document

Continuation sheets of this form -

Description 13

Claim(s) 3

Abstract -

Drawing(s) -

10. If you are also filing any of the following, state how many against each item.

Priority documents

Translations of priority documents

Statement of inventorship and right to grant of a patent (*Patents Form 7/77*)

Request for preliminary examination and search (*Patents Form 9/77*)

Request for substantive examination (*Patents Form 10/77*)

Any other documents
(please specify)

11.

I/We request the grant of a patent on the basis of this application.

Signature

Alison Blaley

Date

21/01/03

12. Name and daytime telephone number of person to contact in the United Kingdom

MARY GADSDEN

01235 208127

Warning

After an application for a patent has been filed, the Comptroller of the Patent Office will consider whether publication or communication of the invention should be prohibited or restricted under Section 22 of the Patents Act 1977. You will be informed if it is necessary to prohibit or restrict your invention in this way. Furthermore, if you live in the United Kingdom, Section 23 of the Patents Act 1977 stops you from applying for a patent abroad without first getting written permission from the Patent Office unless an application has been filed at least 6 weeks beforehand in the United Kingdom for a patent for the same invention and either no direction prohibiting publication or communication has been given, or any such direction has been revoked.

Notes

- If you need help to fill in this form or you have any questions, please contact the Patent Office on 08459 500505.*
- Write your answers in capital letters using black ink or you may type them.*
- If there is not enough space for all the relevant details on any part of this form, please continue on a separate sheet of paper and write "see continuation sheet" in the relevant part(s). Any continuation sheet should be attached to this form.*
- If you have answered 'Yes' Patents Form 7/77 will need to be filed.*
- Once you have filled in the form you must remember to sign and date it.*
- For details of the fee and ways to pay please contact the Patent Office.*

NOVEL COMPOUNDS

The present invention relates to novel piperidine derivatives useful as inhibitors of glucosylceramide synthase (GCS; UDP-glucose:ceramide glucosyltransferase UDP-glucose:N-acylsphingosine D-glucosyltransferase, EC 2.4.1.80), methods for their preparation and their use in medicine, specifically in the treatment and prevention of disease states mediated by GCS. The compounds find use in the treatment of glycolipid storage diseases, diseases associated with glycolipid accumulation, cancers in which glycolipid synthesis is abnormal, infectious diseases caused by organisms which use cell surface glycolipids as receptors, infectious diseases in which synthesis of glucosylceramide is essential or important, diseases in which excessive glycolipid synthesis occurs, neuronal disorders and neuronal injury. Their synthesis is also described, as are pharmaceutical formulations comprising the compounds and methods of treatment using the compounds.

GCS is an intracellular enzyme that catalyzes the assembly of uridine diphosphate-glucose and ceramide into the glycolipid, glucosylceramide. GCS's role in biology is the subject of basic and applied science interest. For example, the role of GCS in regulating ceramide levels has been explored, since this molecule can induce apoptotic cell death (*J. Biol. Chem.*, 2000, Mar 10, 275(10), 7138-43). Similarly, the role of GCS in maintaining cholesterol/glycolipid 'rafts,' cell-surface membrane domains of specialized permeability and functionality that appear to be involved in a variety of signal transduction events has been investigated (*Nature*, 1997, Jun 5, 387(6633), 569-72).

GCS also is a target for treating certain human diseases. Glucosylceramide and structurally related glycolipids are stored in the lysosomes of patients with genetic diseases which result from a mutation in one of the essential glycolipid-degrading enzymes (e.g. Gaucher, Tay Sachs, Sandhoffs, GM1 gangliosidosis and Fabry diseases). Glycolipid storage also occurs as a secondary effect in some tissues (e.g. neuronal tissue) with genetic storage diseases such as Niemann-Pick C disease, mucopolysaccharidoses, mucopolidosis type IV (*Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA*, 1998, May 26, 95(11), 6373-8) and α -mannosidosis (*Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA*, 1991 Dec 15, 88(24), 11330-4). It has been reasoned that GCS inhibitors may be applied to reduce the rate of glycolipid synthesis in diseased cells so that there is less glycolipid present to be stored, a treatment approach termed substrate deprivation. Studies have demonstrated that GCS inhibitors can in fact be used to reduce the glycolipid accumulation seen in cell and animal models of glycolipid storage (*Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA*, 1999, May 25, 96(11), 6388-93; *Science*, 1997, Apr 18, 276(5311), 428-31; *J. Clin. Invest.*, 2000, Jun, 105(11), 1563-71). Furthermore, clinical trials have shown that GCS inhibitors such as N-butyldeoxynojirimycin (NB-DNJ) are useful in treating human patients with Gaucher disease (*Lancet*, 2000, Apr 29, 355(9214), 1481-5). The use of the imino sugar NB-DNJ as a GCS inhibitor is disclosed in EP-A-0698012. EP-A-0536402 and EP-A-0698012 disclose that N-alkyl derivatives of deoxygalactonojirimycin, e.g. N-butyldeoxygalactonojirimycin (NB-DGJ), may also be of use in the treatment of glycolipid storage disorders. EP-A-0698012 also discloses that the corresponding N-butyl derivatives of mannose (NB-DMJ), fucose (NB-DFJ) and N-acetylglucosamine (NB-NAG) do not act as inhibitors of glycolipid biosynthesis.

The use of GCS inhibitors in the treatment of human malignancies has been proposed. Tumours can synthesize abnormal quantities of glycolipids and/or glycolipids not present in the normal tissue. In addition glycolipids or gangliosides in particular are shed by tumour cells and released into the extracellular space and the bloodstream. Both tumour shed and cell surface bound tumour gangliosides can influence tumour host cell interactions such as cell-cell contacts or adhesion (*Methods Enzymol.*, 2000, 312, 447-58), cell motility (*Mol. Chem. Neuropathol.*, 1995 Feb-Apr, 24(2-3), 121-35), growth factor signalling events (*J. Biol. Chem.*, 2000 Nov 3, 275(44), 34213-23), tumour stimulated angiogenesis

Acta. Oncol., 1997, 36(4), 383-7) and tumour specific immune responses (J. Immunol., 1999 Oct 1, 163(7), 3718-26). All these events can affect tumour development and progression. Glycolipids, glucosylceramide in particular, are known to accumulate in multidrug resistant (MDR) tumour cells (Anticancer Res., 1998 Jan-Feb, 18(1B), 475-80) and in vitro treatment of these cells with GCS inhibitors can reverse the MDR phenotype (J. Biol. Chem., 1997, Jan 17, 272(3), 1682-7; Br. J. Cancer, 1999, Oct, 81(3), 423-30).

Cell surface glycolipids also have roles in infectious disease, serving as receptors for the binding of pathogenic bacteria (APMIS, 1990, Dec, 98(12), 1053-60, Review), fungi (Infect. Immun., 1990 Jul, 58(7), 2085-90) and viruses (FEBS Lett., 1984 May 7, 170(1), 15-8). In addition, glycolipids on the surface of cells are bound by bacterial toxins (Methods Enzymol., 2000, 312, 459-73) for instance the B subunit of cholera toxin (ganglioside GM1) and verocytotoxin (globotriaosylceramide GB3) (J. Infect. Dis., 2001, suppl. 70-73, 183).

The use of GCS inhibitors may also be appropriate in a number of other clinical indications which are associated with abnormalities in glycolipid synthesis. Atherosclerotic lesions of human aorta have a higher ganglioside content than unaffected regions of the aorta and serum ganglioside concentrations in atherosclerotic patients are higher than in normal individuals (Lipids, 1994, 29(1), 1-5). Tissue derived from the kidneys of patients with polycystic kidney disease contains high levels of both glucosylceramide and lactosylceramide (J. Lipid. Res., 1996, Jun, 37(6), 1334-44). Renal hypertrophy in an animal model of diabetes is associated with increases in glycolipid synthesis, (J. Clin. Invest., 1993, Mar, 91(3), 797-803).

Glycolipid metabolism also plays a critical role in other neuronal disorders, such as Alzheimer's disease and epilepsy. For instance, Niemann-Pick C (NPC) patient neurons present with fibrillar tangles reminiscent of the morphology seen in Alzheimer's disease.

Interestingly, GM1 ganglioside binding by amyloid beta-protein induces conformational changes that support its formation of fibrous polymers, and the fibrillar deposition of this protein is an early event in Alzheimer's disease (Yanagisawa et al, (1995), Nat. Med. 1, 1062-6; Choo-Smith et al, (1997), Biol. Chem., 272, 22987-90). Thus, decreasing GM1 synthesis with agents such as NB-DNJ could inhibit the fibre formation seen in Alzheimer's disease.

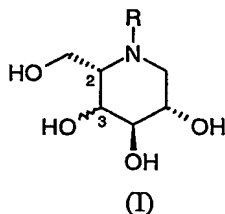
In contrast, preliminary clinical trials have shown that neurodegenerative processes seen with Parkinson's disease, stroke and spinal cord injuries seem to improve by treating patients with GM1 ganglioside (Alter, (1998), Ann. NY Acad. Sci. 845, 391-4011; Schneider, (1998), Ann. NY. Acad. Sci., 845, 363-73; Geisler, (1998), Ann. NY. Acad. Sci., 845, 374-81). It is possible that co-administering glucosylceramide synthesis inhibitors would provide the clinician greater control over this treatment course. Inhibitors like NB-DNJ would limit patient-specific inconsistencies by blocking their neuronal glycolipid synthesis. In addition, inhibiting glucosylceramide synthesis would limit the metabolism of administered glycolipids into other, perhaps unproductive, forms. Thus, the ability to modulate glucosylceramide synthesis with inhibitors such as NB-DNJ may be useful in treatment of a wide variety of neuronal disorders.

It has also been shown that imino sugars can reversibly induce male sterility and can therefore be used as male contraceptives.

WO02/055498, published after the priority date of the present application, discloses other piperidine derivatives useful as GCS inhibitors.

Given the importance of GCS in a wide spectrum of basic and applied science interests, it is essential that new tools that provide a means for modulating this enzyme's function be developed. Towards this end, we have identified a class of novel compounds that are useful in inhibiting GCS's catalytic activity.

According to the invention there is provided a compound of formula (I) or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or prodrug thereof:



5 wherein

R is C_{1-3} alkyl Ar^1 where Ar^1 is phenyl or pyridyl;

wherein phenyl is substituted by one or more substituents selected from CN, $CON(R^1)_2$, SO_2R^2 , $N(R^2)_2$, $N(R^1)COR^2$, and C_{1-3} alkyl Ar^2 wherein one of the $-CH_2-$ groups of the alkyl chain may be replaced with O and where Ar^2 is phenyl or a 5- or 6-membered heteroaryl group containing up to 3 heteroatoms selected from N, O and S; or two adjacent substituents on the Ar^1 phenyl may together form a fused 5- or 6-membered saturated or unsaturated ring optionally containing 1 or 2 heteroatoms selected from N and O;

and wherein pyridyl is substituted by one or more substituents, selected from, CN, $CON(R^1)_2$, SO_2R^2 , $N(R^2)_2$, $N(R^1)COR^2$, F, Cl, Br, CF_3 , OCF_3 , OR^3 , and C_{1-3} alkyl Ar^2 wherein one of the $-CH_2-$ groups of the alkyl chain may be replaced with O and where Ar^2 is phenyl or a 5- or 6-membered heteroaryl group containing up to 3 heteroatoms selected from N, O and S; or two adjacent substituents on the pyridyl may together form a fused 5- or 6-membered saturated or unsaturated ring optionally containing 1 or 2 heteroatoms selected from N and O;

and the Ar^1 or Ar^2 phenyl is optionally substituted by one or more additional substituents selected from F, Cl, Br, CF_3 , OCF_3 , and OR^3 ;

R^1 is H, C_{1-6} alkyl, Ar^3 , or C_{1-6} alkyl Ar^3 where Ar^3 is phenyl or a 5- or 6-membered heteroaryl group containing up to 3 heteroatoms selected from N, O and S, any of which may be substituted by one or more substituents selected from F, Cl, Br, CF_3 , OCF_3 , and OR^3 ;

R^2 is C_{1-6} alkyl, Ar^3 , or C_{1-6} alkyl Ar^3 where Ar^3 is phenyl or a 5- or 6-membered heteroaryl group containing up to 3 heteroatoms selected from N, O and S, any of which may be substituted by one or more substituents selected from F, Cl, Br, CF_3 , OCF_3 , and OR^3 ; and

R^3 is H, or C_{1-6} alkyl.

The hydroxyl group at position 3 may be fixed in either the R or the S configuration. The hydroxyl group at position 3 is preferably in the R configuration, i.e. the compound of formula (I) has the stereochemistry (2S,3R,4R,5S).

R is preferably C_1 alkyl Ar^1 .

Ar^1 is preferably phenyl, wherein phenyl is substituted by one or more substituents selected from CN, $CON(R^1)_2$, SO_2R^2 , $N(R^2)_2$, $N(R^1)COR^2$, and C_{1-3} alkyl Ar^2 wherein one of the $-CH_2-$ groups of the alkyl chain may be replaced with O and where Ar^2 is phenyl or a 5- or 6-membered heteroaryl group containing up to 3 heteroatoms selected from N, O and S; or two adjacent substituents on the Ar^1 phenyl may together form a fused 5- or 6-membered saturated or unsaturated ring optionally containing 1 or 2 heteroatoms, selected from N and O; and the Ar^1 or Ar^2 phenyl is optionally substituted by one or more additional substituents selected from F, Cl, Br, CF_3 , OCF_3 , and OR^3 .

In the groups $CON(R^1)_2$ and $N(R^2)_2$ the R^1 and R^2 groups may be the same or different.

When Ar^2 or Ar^3 is a 5- or 6-membered heteroaryl group, examples of heteroaryl groups include furan, thiophene, oxazole, triazole, pyridine, pyrazine and pyrimidine.

When two adjacent substituents on the Ar^1 form a fused 5- or 6-membered saturated or unsaturated ring optionally containing 1 or 2 heteroatoms selected from N and O examples of bicyclic

groups which may be formed include benzofuran, benzothiophene, indole, benzoxazole, quinoline, isoquinoline.

A specific group of compounds which may be mentioned are those where R is C_{1-3} alkylAr¹ where Ar¹ is phenyl or pyridyl,

5 wherein phenyl is substituted by one or more substituents selected from CN, CON(R¹)₂, SO₂R², N(R²)₂, and N(R¹)COR², or two adjacent substituents on the Ar¹ phenyl may together form a fused 5- or 6-membered saturated or unsaturated ring optionally containing 1 or 2 heteroatoms, selected from N and O, and the Ar¹ phenyl is optionally substituted by one or more additional substituents selected from F, Cl, Br, CF₃, OCF₃, and OR¹;

10 and wherein pyridyl is substituted by one or more substituents, selected from, CN, CON(R¹)₂, SO₂R², N(R²)₂, N(R¹)COR², F, Cl, Br, CF₃, OCF₃, and OR¹ or two adjacent substituents on the pyridyl may together form a fused 5- or 6-membered saturated or unsaturated ring which may optionally contain 1 or 2 heteroatoms, selected from N and O.

The compounds of the invention preferably have a molecular weight of less than 800, more preferably less than 600.

Specific compounds of the invention include:

3,4,5-Piperidinetriol, 1-(4-benzyloxy-2-methoxybenzyl)-2-(hydroxymethyl) (2S,3R,4R,5S);
3,4,5-Piperidinetriol, 1-(2-chloro-4-dimethylaminobenzyl)-2-(hydroxymethyl) (2S,3R,4R,5S);
3,4,5-Piperidinetriol, 1-(3-cyano-4-dimethylamino-2-fluorobenzyl)-2-(hydroxymethyl) (2S,3R,4R,5S);
20 and
3,4,5-Piperidinetriol, 1-(4-acetylaminobenzyl)-2-(hydroxymethyl) (2S,3R,4R,5S);
and pharmaceutically acceptable salts and prodrugs thereof.

As described herein, for all aspects of the invention, reference to compounds of formula (I) encompasses pharmaceutically acceptable salts and prodrugs thereof.

25 As described herein, the compounds of the present invention can be used for the inhibition of GCS. Thus, an aspect of the present invention provides the use of the compounds of formula (I) in medicine.

Suitable, pharmaceutically acceptable salts of the compounds of formula (I) include, but are not limited to, salts with inorganic acids such as hydrochloride, sulfate, phosphate, diphosphate,
30 hydrobromide, and nitrate, or salts with an organic acid such as malate, maleate, fumarate, tartrate, succinate, citrate, acetate, lactate, methanesulfonate, p-toluenesulfonate, palmitate, salicylate, and stearate.

Suitable prodrugs of the compounds of formula (I) include, but are not limited to, pharmaceutically acceptable esters such as C_{1-6} alkyl esters.

35 Some of the compounds of this invention may be crystallised or recrystallised from solvents such as aqueous and organic solvents. In such cases solvates may be formed. This invention includes within its scope stoichiometric solvates including hydrates as well as compounds containing variable amounts of water that may be produced by processes such as lyophilisation.

Certain of the R groups of compounds of formula (I) may exist in the form of optical isomers, e.g. diastereoisomers and mixtures of isomers in all ratios, e.g. racemic mixtures. The invention includes all
40 such forms, in particular the pure isomeric forms. The different isomeric forms may be separated or resolved one from the other by conventional methods, or any given isomer may be obtained by conventional synthetic methods or by stereospecific or asymmetric syntheses.

Since the compounds of formula (I) are intended for use in pharmaceutical compositions it will
45 readily be understood that they are each preferably provided in substantially pure form, for example at least 60% pure, more suitably at least 75% pure and preferably at least 85%, especially at least 98% pure

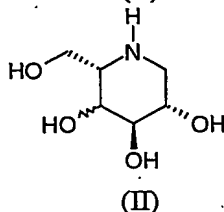
b are on a weight for weight basis). Impure preparations of the compounds may be used for preparing the more pure forms used in the pharmaceutical compositions; these less pure preparations of the compounds should contain at least 1%, more suitably at least 5% and preferably from 10 to 59% of a compound of the formula (I) or pharmaceutically acceptable derivative thereof.

- 5 The term "alkyl" as used herein whether on its own or as part of a larger group e.g. "alkylaryl", includes both straight and branched chain radicals. The term alkyl also includes those radicals wherein one or more hydrogen atoms are replaced by fluorine.

10 The compounds of formula (I) can be prepared by art-recognized procedures from known or commercially available starting materials. If the starting materials are unavailable from a commercial source, their synthesis is described herein, or they can be prepared by procedures known in the art.

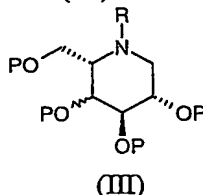
Specifically, the compounds of formula (I) may be prepared by processes comprising:

- a) reductive amination of an aldehyde of formula $R^4\text{CHO}$ wherein R^4 is $\text{C}_{0-2}\text{alkylAr}^1$ where Ar^1 is as defined in formula (I) with a compound of formula (II):



15 the reductive amination may be performed by methods known to those skilled in the art, e.g. using NaBH_3CN or a supported reagent such as (polystyrylmethyl) trimethylammonium cyanoborohydride in acetic acid-methanol or HCl -methanol, or using $\text{NaBH}(\text{OAc})_3$ in a solvent; or

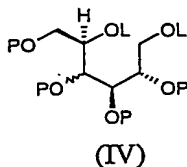
- b) deprotection of a compound of formula (III):



20 wherein R is as defined in formula (I), and P, which may be the same or different, are hydroxy protecting groups e.g. benzyl or substituted benzyl. When P is benzyl or substituted benzyl the deprotection is preferably conducted in the presence of hydrogen gas and a catalyst, such as, PdCl_2 or palladium on carbon in a suitable solvent, such as, an alcohol, e.g. ethanol. It will be understood that when P is benzyl or substituted benzyl and R is substituted benzyl the R group can also be removed under these conditions to give compounds of formula (II). Thus compounds of formula (I) where R is substituted benzyl are preferably produced using process a) above.

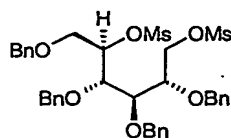
- 25 30 The compounds of formula (II) are known, see e.g. Carbohydr. Res., 1993, 246, 377-81 (2S,3R,4R,5S) and Tet. Lett., 1997, 38(45), 8009-12 (2S,3S,4R,5S).

Compounds of formula (III) may be prepared by reacting a compound of formula (IV):



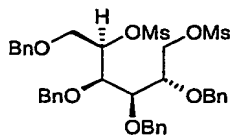
- 35 wherein OL, which may be the same or different are leaving groups, such as mesyloxy, and P is as defined for formula (III), with an amine of formula RNH_2 , wherein R is as defined in formula (I), either neat or in a solvent such as tetrahydrofuran.

Compound (IVa), wherein L is mesyl and P is benzyl, is a known compound: V.S. Rao et al., Can. J. Chem., (1981), 59(2), 333-8; P.A. Fowler et al., Carbohydr. Res., (1993), 246, 377-81.



(IVa)

5 Compound (IVb), wherein L is mesyl and P is benzyl, may be prepared by reacting 2,3,4,6-tetra-O-benzyl-D-galactitol with mesyl chloride in the presence of a base such as pyridine, as described in WO02/055498.



(IVb)

10 Any novel intermediate compounds as described herein also fall within the scope of the present invention.

Thus according to a further aspect of the invention there is provided a compound of formula (III) as defined above.

15 During the synthesis of the compounds of formula (I) labile functional groups in the intermediate compounds, e.g. hydroxy, carboxy and amino groups, may be protected. A comprehensive discussion of the ways in which various labile functional groups may be protected and methods for cleaving the resulting protected derivatives is given in for example *Protective Groups in Organic Chemistry*, T.W. Greene and P.G.M. Wuts, (Wiley-Interscience, New York, 2nd edition, 1991).

20 The compounds of formula (I) may be prepared singly or as compound libraries comprising at least 2, for example 5 to 500 compounds, and more preferably 10 to 100 compounds of formula (I). Libraries of compounds of formula (I) may be prepared by multiple parallel synthesis using either solution phase or solid phase chemistry, by procedures known to those skilled in the art.

Thus according to a further aspect of the invention there is provided a compound library comprising at least 2 compounds of formula (I) or pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof.

25 The pharmaceutically acceptable salts and prodrugs of the compounds of formula (I) may be prepared by methods well known to those skilled in the art.

30 The pharmaceutically effective compounds of formula (I), may be administered in conventional dosage forms prepared by combining a compound of formula (I) ("active ingredient") with standard pharmaceutical carriers or diluents according to conventional procedures well known in the art. These procedures may involve mixing, granulating and compressing or dissolving the ingredients as appropriate to the desired preparation.

According to a further aspect the present invention provides a pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound of formula (I), together with one or more pharmaceutically acceptable carriers, excipients and/or diluents.

35 The active ingredient or pharmaceutical composition can be administered simultaneously, separately or sequentially with another treatment for a glycolipid storage disorder.

40 The active ingredient or pharmaceutical composition may be administered to a subject by any of the routes conventionally used for drug administration, for example they may be adapted for oral (including buccal, sublingual), topical (including transdermal), nasal (including inhalation), rectal, vaginal or parenteral (including subcutaneous, intramuscular, intravenous or intradermal) administration to mammals

cluding humans. The most suitable route for administration in any given case will depend on the particular compound or pharmaceutical composition, the subject, and the nature and severity of the disease and the physical condition of the subject. Such compositions may be prepared by any method known in the art of pharmacy, for example by bringing into association the active ingredient with the carrier(s) or excipient(s).

Pharmaceutical compositions adapted for oral administration may be presented as discrete units such as capsules or tablets; powders or granules; solutions or suspensions in aqueous or non-aqueous liquids; edible foams or whips; or oil-in-water liquid emulsions or water-in-oil liquid emulsions.

Tablets and capsules for oral administration may be in unit dose presentation form, and may contain conventional excipients such as binding agents, for example syrup, acacia, gelatin, sorbitol, tragacanth, or polyvinylpyrrolidone; fillers, for example lactose, sugar, maize-starch, calcium phosphate, sorbitol or glycine; tableting lubricants, for example magnesium stearate, talc, polyethylene glycol or silica; disintegrants, for example potato starch; or acceptable wetting agents such as sodium lauryl sulfate. The tablets may be coated according to methods well known in normal pharmaceutical practice. Oral liquid preparations may be in the form of, for example, aqueous or oily suspensions, solutions, emulsions, syrups or elixirs, or may be presented as a dry product for reconstitution with water or other suitable vehicle before use. Such liquid preparations may contain conventional additives, such as suspending agents, for example sorbitol, methyl cellulose, glucose syrup, gelatin, hydroxyethyl cellulose, carboxymethyl cellulose, aluminium stearate gel or hydrogenated edible fats, emulsifying agents, for example lecithin, sorbitan monooleate, or acacia; non-aqueous vehicles (which may include edible oils), for example almond oil, oily esters such as glycerine, propylene glycol, or ethyl alcohol; preservatives, for example methyl or propyl *p*-hydroxybenzoate or sorbic acid, and, if desired, conventional flavouring or colouring agents.

Pharmaceutical compositions adapted for topical administration may be formulated as ointments, creams, suspensions, lotions, powders, solutions, pastes, gels, impregnated dressings, sprays, aerosols or oils and may contain appropriate conventional additives such as preservatives, solvents to assist drug penetration and emollients in ointments and creams. Such applications include those to the eye or other external tissues, for example the mouth and skin and the compositions are preferably applied as a topical ointment or cream. When formulated in an ointment, the active ingredient may be employed with either a paraffinic or a water-miscible ointment base. Alternatively, the active ingredient may be formulated in a cream with an oil-in-water cream base or a water-in-oil base. The composition may also contain compatible conventional carriers, such as cream or ointment bases and ethanol or oleyl alcohol for lotions.

Pharmaceutical compositions adapted for topical administration to the eye include eye drops wherein the active ingredient is dissolved or suspended in a suitable carrier, especially an aqueous solvent.

Pharmaceutical compositions adapted for topical administration in the mouth include lozenges, pastilles and mouth washes.

Pharmaceutical compositions adapted for transdermal administration may be presented as discrete patches intended to remain in intimate contact with the epidermis of the recipient for a prolonged period of time. For example, the active ingredient may be delivered from the patch by iontophoresis as generally described in *Pharmaceutical Research*, 3(6), 318, (1986).

Pharmaceutical compositions adapted for nasal administration wherein the carrier is a solid include a coarse powder having a particle size for example in the range 20 to 500 microns which is administered by rapid inhalation through the nasal passage from a container of the powder held close up to the nose. Suitable compositions wherein the carrier is a liquid, for administration as a nasal spray or as nasal drops, include aqueous or oil solutions of the active ingredient.

Pharmaceutical compositions adapted for administration by inhalation include fine particle dusts or mists which may be generated by means of various types of metered dose pressurised aerosols, nebulizers or insufflators.

Pharmaceutical compositions adapted for rectal administration may be presented as suppositories or enemas. Suppositories will contain conventional suppository bases, e.g. cocoa-butter or other glyceride.

Pharmaceutical compositions adapted for vaginal administration may be presented as pessaries, tampons, creams, gels, pastes, foams or spray compositions.

Pharmaceutical compositions adapted for parenteral administration include aqueous and non-aqueous sterile injection solutions which may contain anti-oxidants, buffers, bacteriostats and solutes which render the formulation isotonic with the blood of the intended recipient; and aqueous and non-aqueous sterile suspensions which may include suspending agents and thickening agents. The compositions may be presented in unit-dose or multi-dose containers, for example sealed ampoules and vials, and may be stored in a freeze-dried (lyophilized) condition requiring only the addition of the sterile liquid carrier, for example water for injections, immediately prior to use. Extemporaneous injection solutions and suspensions may be prepared from sterile powders, granules and tablets.

For parenteral administration, fluid unit dosage forms are prepared utilizing the active ingredient and a sterile vehicle, water being preferred. The active ingredient, depending on the vehicle and concentration used, can be either suspended or dissolved in the vehicle. In preparing solutions the active ingredient can be dissolved in water for injection and filter sterilised before filling into a suitable vial or ampoule and sealing.

Advantageously, agents such as a local anaesthetic, preservative and buffering agents can be dissolved in the vehicle. To enhance the stability, the composition can be frozen after filling into the vial and the water removed under vacuum. The dry lyophilized powder is then sealed in the vial and an accompanying vial of water for injection may be supplied to reconstitute the liquid prior to use. Parenteral suspensions are prepared in substantially the same manner except that the active ingredient is suspended in the vehicle instead of being dissolved and sterilization cannot be accomplished by filtration. The active ingredient can be sterilised by exposure to ethylene oxide before suspending in the sterile vehicle. Advantageously, a surfactant or wetting agent is included in the composition to facilitate uniform distribution of the active ingredient.

The pharmaceutical compositions according to the invention are preferably adapted for oral administration.

It should be understood that in addition to the ingredients particularly mentioned above, the compositions may also include other agents conventional in the art having regard to the type of formulation in question, for example those suitable for oral administration may include flavouring agents. They may also contain therapeutically active agents in addition to the compounds of the present invention. Such carriers may be present as from about 1% up to about 98% of the formulation. More usually they will form up to about 80% of the formulation.

The compositions may contain from 0.1% by weight, preferably from 10-60% by weight, of the active material, depending on the method of administration.

Pharmaceutical compositions may be presented in unit dose forms containing a predetermined amount of active ingredient per dose. Such a unit may contain for example 0.1mg/kg to 750mg/kg, more preferably 0.1mg/kg to 10mg/kg depending on the condition being treated, the route of administration and the age, weight and condition of the patient. Preferred unit dosage compositions are those containing a daily dose or sub-dose, as herein above recited, or an appropriate fraction thereof, of an active ingredient.

It will be recognized by one of skill in the art that the optimal quantity and spacing of individual dosages of compounds of the invention will be determined by the nature and extent of the condition being

ated, the form, route and site of administration, and the particular subject being treated, and that such optimums can be determined by conventional techniques. It will also be appreciated by one of skill in the art that the optimal course of treatment, i.e., the number of doses of the aforementioned compounds given per day for a defined number of days, can be ascertained by those skilled in the art using conventional course of treatment determination tests.

No toxicological effects are indicated when the aforementioned compounds of formula (I) are administered in the above mentioned dosage range.

The compounds of the present invention are useful in that they are capable of inhibiting glucosylceramide synthase. Thus, the compounds of the invention can be used in the treatment of various glycolipid storage diseases such as Gaucher's disease, Sandhoff's disease, Tay-Sachs disease, Fabry disease, GM1 gangliosidosis etc. In addition, compounds such as this also can find use in the treatment of conditions in which glycolipid accumulation occurs such as Niemann-Pick disease, mucopolysaccharidoses (MPS I, MPS IIIA, MPS IIIB, MPS VI and MPS VII), mucopolidosis type IV and α -mannosidosis.

The compounds of the present invention can also be used in the treatment of cancers in which glycolipid synthesis is abnormal such as brain tumours, neuroblastoma, malignant melanoma, renal adenocarcinoma and multi-drug resistant cancers in general.

The compounds of the present invention can also be used in the treatment of disease caused by infectious organisms which use cell surface glycolipid as receptors for the infectious organism or toxin produced by the infectious organism.

The compounds of the present invention may also be used in the treatment of disease caused by infectious organisms for which the synthesis of glucosylceramide is an essential or important process such as the pathogenic fungus *Cryptococcus neoformans*.

The compounds of the present invention can also be used in the treatment of disease in which excessive glycolipid synthesis occurs such as but not limited to, atherosclerosis, polycystic kidney disease and diabetic renal hypertrophy.

The compounds of the present invention can also be used in the treatment of neuronal disorders, such as Alzheimer's disease and epilepsy; and neuronal degenerative disease such as Parkinsons' disease

The compounds of the present invention can also be used in the treatment of neuronal injury such as spinal cord injuries or stroke.

The compounds of the present invention can also be used for reversibly rendering a male mammal infertile.

The compounds of the present invention can also be used in the treatment of obesity.

In additional aspects, therefore, the present invention provides:

(i) the use of a compound of formula (I) in the manufacture of a medicament for use as an inhibitor of glucosylceramide synthase.

(ii) the use of a compound of formula (I) in the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment of a glycolipid storage disease. Examples of glycolipid storage disease which can be treated include, but are not limited to: Gaucher disease, Sandhoffs disease, Tay-Sachs disease, Fabry disease or GM1 gangliosidosis.

(iii) the use of a compound of formula (I) in the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment of Niemann-Pick disease types A and C.

(iv) the use of a compound of formula (I) in the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment of mucopolysaccharidosis type I, mucopolysaccharidosis type IIID, mucopolysaccharidosis type IIIA, mucopolysaccharidosis type VI or mucopolysaccharidosis type VII.

(v) the use of a compound of formula (I) in the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment of α -mannosidosis or mucopolidosis type IV.

(vi) the use of a compound of formula (I) in the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment of cancers in which glycolipid synthesis is abnormal, including but not limited to neuronal cancer including neuroblastoma, brain cancer, renal adenocarcinoma, malignant melanoma, multiple myeloma and multi-drug resistant cancers.

(vii) the use of a compound of formula (I) in the manufacture of a medicament for use in the treatment of Alzheimer's disease, epilepsy or stroke.

(viii) the use of a compound of formula (I) in the manufacture of a medicament for use in the treatment of Parkinson's disease.

(ix) the use of the compound of formula (I) in the manufacture of a medicament in the treatment of spinal injury.

(x) the use of a compound of formula (I) in the manufacture of a medicament for use in the treatment of disease caused by infectious microorganisms which utilize glycolipids on the surface of cells as receptors for the organism itself or toxins produced by the organism.

(xi) the use of a compound of formula (I) in the manufacture of a medicament for use in the treatment of disease caused by infectious organisms for which the synthesis of glucosylceramide is an essential or important process such as but not limited to pathologies associated with infections of the pathogenic fungus *Cryptococcus neoformans*.

(xii) the use of a compound of formula (I) in the manufacture of a medicament for use in the treatment of diseases associated with abnormal glycolipid synthesis including but not limited to polycystic kidney disease, diabetic renal hypertrophy and atherosclerosis.

(xiii) the use of a compound of formula (I) in the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment of a condition treatable by the administration of a ganglioside such as GM1 ganglioside. Examples of such conditions are Parkinson's disease, stroke and spinal cord injuries.

(xiv) the use of a compound of formula (I) in the manufacture of a medicament for reversibly rendering a male mammal infertile.

(xv) the use of a compound of formula (I) in the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment of obesity, e.g. as an appetite suppressant.

(xvi) a method for the treatment of a glycolipid storage disease, e.g. Gaucher's disease, Sandhoff's disease, Tay-Sachs disease or GM1 gangliosidosis, which comprises the step of administering to a patient an effective amount of a compound of formula (I).

(xvii) a method for the treatment of Niemann-Pick disease types A and C, which comprises the step of administering to a patient an effective amount of a compound of formula (I).

(xviii) a method for the treatment of mucopolysaccharidosis type I, mucopolysaccharidosis type IIID, mucopolysaccharidosis type IIIA, mucopolysaccharidosis type VI or mucopolysaccharidosis type VII which comprises the step of administering to a patient an effective amount of a compound of formula (I).

(xix) a method for the treatment of α -mannosidosis or mucopolipidosis type IV which comprises the step of administering to a patient an effective amount of a compound of formula (I).

(xx) a method for the treatment of cancers in which glycolipid synthesis is abnormal, including but not limited to neuronal cancer including neuroblastoma, brain cancer, renal adenocarcinoma, malignant melanoma, multiple myeloma and multi-drug resistant cancers which comprises the step of administering to a patient an effective amount of a compound of formula (I).

(xxi) a method for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease, epilepsy or stroke which comprises the step of administering to a patient an effective amount of a compound of formula (I).

(xxii) a method for the treatment of Parkinson's disease, which comprises the step of administering to a patient an effective amount of a compound of formula (I).

(xxiii) a method for the treatment of spinal injury which comprises the step of administering to a patient an effective amount of a compound of formula (I).

(xxiv) a method for the treatment of disease caused by infectious microorganisms which utilize glycolipids on the surface of cells as receptors for the organism itself or toxins produced by the organism which comprises the step of administering to a patient an effective amount of a compound of formula (I).

(xxv) a method for the treatment of disease caused by infectious organisms for which the synthesis of glucosylceramide is an essential or important process such as but not limited to pathologies associated with infections of the pathogenic fungus *Cryptococcus neoformans* which comprises the step of administering to a patient an effective amount of a compound of formula (I).

(xxvi) a method for the treatment of diseases associated with abnormal glycolipid synthesis including but not limited to polycystic kidney disease, diabetic renal hypertrophy and atherosclerosis, which comprises the step of administering to a patient an effective amount of a compound of formula (I).

(xxvii) a method for the treatment of a condition treatable by the administration of a ganglioside such as GM1 ganglioside, which comprises the step of administering to a patient an effective amount of a compound of formula (I). Examples of such conditions are Parkinson's disease, stroke and spinal cord injuries.

(xxviii) a method for reversibly rendering a male mammal infertile, which comprises the step of administering to said male mammal an effective amount of a compound of formula (I).

(xxix) a method for the treatment of obesity, which comprises the step of administering to a patient an effective amount of a compound of formula (I).

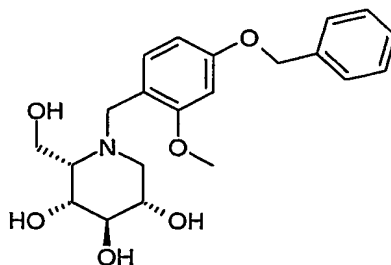
The invention also provides for the use of a compound of formula (I) for the treatment of the above mentioned diseases and conditions.

All publications, including, but not limited to, patents and patent applications, cited in this specification, are herein incorporated by reference as if each individual publication were specifically and individually indicated to be incorporated by reference herein as though fully set forth.

The invention will now be described by reference to the following examples, which are merely illustrative and is not to be construed as a limitation of the scope of the present invention.

Examples

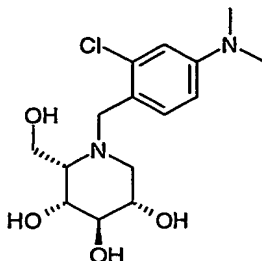
Example 1: 3,4,5-Piperidinetriol, 1-(4-benzyloxy-2-methoxybenzyl)-2-(hydroxymethyl) (2S,3R,4R,5S)



To a stirred solution of 2-(hydroxymethyl)-3,4,5-piperidinetriol (2S,3R,4R,5S) (57 mg, 0.35 mmol) and 4-benzyloxy-2-methoxybenzaldehyde (240 mg, 0.99 mmol) in 2ml of methanol over 200 mg (0.87mmol) of (polystyrylmethyl) trimethylammonium cyanoborohydride (180 mg, 0.78 mmol) was added 0.2ml of acetic acid. The resultant mixture was stirred at room temperature for 16 h. The crude reaction mixture was passed through a plug of strongly acidic Dowex 50X4-200 resin (1 g) which had been pre-washed with methanol (10 ml). The resin was eluted with methanol (25ml) to remove all non basic side products. The desired compound was then eluted using a solution of 7:1 methanol/ammonium hydroxide (20 ml). The resulting solution was concentrated to a small volume (1 ml) and freeze dried to afford the title compound as a white solid. 68 mg (50%). ¹H NMR (d₄-methanol) δ 2.58 (1H, m), 2.77

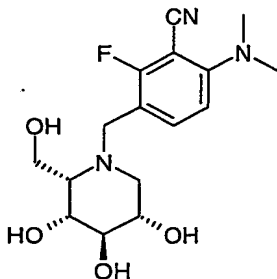
(H, m), 3.13 (1H, m), 3.43 (1H, m), 3.61 (1H, m), 3.77-3.92 (8H, m), 5.10 (2H, s), 6.58 (1H, d, J = 8Hz), 6.62 (1H, bs), 7.22 (1H, d, J = 8Hz), 7.30-7.50 (5H, m). MS m/z 390.3 (M+H)⁺.

Example 2: 3,4,5-Piperidinetriol, 1-(2-chloro-4-dimethylaminobenzyl)-2-(hydroxymethyl) (2S,3R,4R,5S)



To a mixture of 2-(hydroxymethyl)-3,4,5-piperidinetriol (2S,3R,4R,5S) (50 mg, 0.31 mmol) and (polystyrylmethyl) trimethylammonium cyanoborohydride (180 mg, 0.78 mmol) in 10% acetic acid in methanol (2 ml) was added 2-chloro-4-dimethylaminobenzaldehyde (140 mg, 0.762 mmol) and the reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature overnight. The reaction mixture was passed through a plug of strongly acidic Dowex 50X4-200 resin (3 g) which had been pre-washed with 10% aqueous hydrochloric acid. The resin was washed with methanol (25 ml) to remove all non basic side products. The desired compound was then eluted using a solution of 2:2:1 methanol/water/ammonium hydroxide (100 ml). The resulting solution was concentrated to a small volume (1 ml) and freeze dried to afford the title compound as a white solid, 53 mg, (59%). ¹H NMR (d4-methanol) δ 2.61 (1H, m), 2.76 (1H, m), 2.95 (6H, s), 3.17 (1H, m), 3.41 (1H, m), 3.55 (1H, m), 3.65-3.93 (5H, m), 6.70 (1H, m), 6.75 (1H, m), 7.30 (1H, m). MS m/z 331.2 (M+H)⁺.

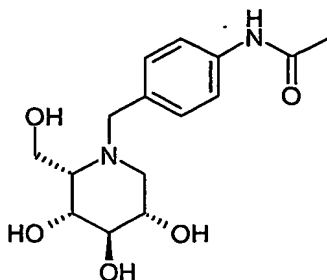
Example 3: 3,4,5-Piperidinetriol, 1-(3-cyano-4-dimethylamino-2-fluorobenzyl)-2-(hydroxymethyl) (2S,3R,4R,5S)



To a mixture of 2-(hydroxymethyl)-3,4,5-piperidinetriol (2S,3R,4R,5S) (50 mg, 0.31 mmol) and (polystyrylmethyl) trimethylammonium cyanoborohydride (180 mg, 0.78 mmol) in 10% acetic acid in methanol (2 ml) was added 3-cyano-4-dimethylamino-2-fluorobenzaldehyde (192 mg, 0.76 mmol) and the reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature overnight. The reaction mixture was passed through a plug of strongly acidic Dowex 50X4-200 resin (3 g) which had been pre-washed with 10% aqueous hydrochloric acid. The resin was washed with methanol (25 ml) to remove all non-basic side products. The desired compound was then eluted using a solution of 2:2:1 methanol/water/ammonium hydroxide (100 ml). The resulting solution was concentrated to a small volume (1 ml) and freeze dried to afford the title compound as a white solid, 43 mg, (49%). ¹H NMR (d4-methanol) δ 2.60-2.75 (2H, m), 3.05-3.15 (7H, m), 3.40 (1H, m), 3.52 (1H, m), 3.75 (1H, m), 3.88-3.95 (4H, m), 6.82 (1H, d, J = 9 Hz), 7.57 (1H, dd, J = 9 Hz). MS m/z 340.2 (M+H)⁺.

Example 4: 3,4,5-Piperidinetriol,
(2S,3R,4R,5S)

1-(4-N-acetylaminobenzyl)-2-(hydroxymethyl)



To a mixture of 2-(hydroxymethyl)-3,4,5-piperidinetriol (2S,3R,4R,5S) (50 mg, 0.31 mmol) and (polystyrylmethyl) trimethylammonium cyanoborohydride (180 mg, 0.78 mmol) in 10% acetic acid in methanol (2 ml) was added 4-acetylaminobenzaldehyde (124 mg, 0.76 mmol) and the reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature overnight. The reaction mixture was passed through a plug of strongly acidic Dowex 50X4-200 resin (3 g) which had been pre-washed with 10% aqueous hydrochloric acid. The resin was washed with methanol (25 ml) to remove all non-basic side products. The desired compound was then eluted using a solution of 2:2:1 methanol/water/ammonium hydroxide (100 ml). The resulting solution was concentrated to a small volume (1 ml) and freeze dried to afford the title compound as a white solid, 65mg, (69%). ¹H NMR (d₄-methanol) δ 2.15 (3H, s), 2.61 (1H, m), 2.74 (1H, m), 3.10 (1H, m), 3.42 (1H, m), 3.55 (1H, m), 3.78 (1H, m), 3.81-3.96 (4H, m), 7.34 (2H, d, J = 9 Hz), 7.52 (2H, d, J = 9 Hz). MS *m/z* 311.2 (M+H)⁺.

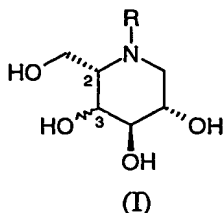
Biological Data

The compounds of the invention were assayed to determine their IC₅₀ concentrations against GCS. Table 1 shows data for the human GCS enzyme. The assay for inhibition of GCS was performed essentially as described in Platt et al, J.Biol.Chem., (1994), 269, 27108, the enzyme source being human recombinant GCS expressed in insect cells.

Compound	IC ₅₀ μM
Example 1	2.7
Example 2	22.0
Example 3	2.3
Example 4	11.0

CLAIMS:

1. A compound of formula (I) or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or prodrug thereof:



wherein

R is C_{1-3} alkylAr¹ where Ar¹ is phenyl or pyridyl;

wherein phenyl is substituted by one or more substituents selected from CN, $CON(R^1)_2$, SO_2R^2 , $N(R^2)_2$, $N(R^1)COR^2$, and C_{1-3} alkylAr² wherein one of the $-CH_2-$ groups of the alkyl chain may be replaced with O and where Ar² is phenyl or a 5- or 6-membered heteroaryl group containing up to 3 heteroatoms selected from N, O and S; or two adjacent substituents on the Ar¹ phenyl may together form a fused 5- or 6-membered saturated or unsaturated ring optionally containing 1 or 2 heteroatoms selected from N and O;

and wherein pyridyl is substituted by one or more substituents, selected from, CN, $CON(R^1)_2$, SO_2R^2 , $N(R^2)_2$, $N(R^1)COR^2$, F, Cl, Br, CF_3 , OCF_3 , OR^3 , and C_{1-3} alkylAr² wherein one of the $-CH_2-$ groups of the alkyl chain may be replaced with O and where Ar² is phenyl or a 5- or 6-membered heteroaryl group containing up to 3 heteroatoms selected from N, O and S; or two adjacent substituents on the pyridyl may together form a fused 5- or 6-membered saturated or unsaturated ring optionally containing 1 or 2 heteroatoms selected from N and O;

and the Ar¹ or Ar² phenyl is optionally substituted by one or more additional substituents selected from F, Cl, Br, CF_3 , OCF_3 , and OR^3 ;

R¹ is H, C_{1-6} alkyl, Ar³, or C_{1-6} alkylAr³ where Ar³ is phenyl or a 5- or 6-membered heteroaryl group containing up to 3 heteroatoms selected from N, O and S, any of which may be substituted by one or more substituents selected from F, Cl, Br, CF_3 , OCF_3 , and OR^3 ;

R² is C_{1-6} alkyl, Ar³, or C_{1-6} alkylAr³ where Ar³ is phenyl or a 5- or 6-membered heteroaryl group containing up to 3 heteroatoms selected from N, O and S, any of which may be substituted by one or more substituents selected from F, Cl, Br, CF_3 , OCF_3 , and OR^3 ; and

R³ is H, or C_{1-6} alkyl.

2. A compound as defined in claim 1 wherein the hydroxyl group at position 3 is in the R configuration.
3. A compound as defined in claim 1 or 2 wherein R is C_1 alkylAr¹.
4. A compound as defined in any one of claims 1 to 3 wherein Ar¹ is phenyl, wherein phenyl is substituted by one or more substituents selected from CN, $CON(R^1)_2$, SO_2R^2 , $N(R^2)_2$, $N(R^1)COR^2$, and C_{1-3} alkylAr² wherein one of the $-CH_2-$ groups of the alkyl chain may be replaced with O and where Ar² is phenyl or a 5- or 6-membered heteroaryl group containing up to 3 heteroatoms selected from N, O and S; or two adjacent substituents on the Ar¹ phenyl may together form a fused 5- or 6-membered saturated or unsaturated ring optionally containing 1 or 2 heteroatoms, selected from N and O; and the Ar¹ or Ar²

phenyl is optionally substituted by one or more additional substituents selected from F, Cl, Br, CF₃, OCF₃, and OR³.

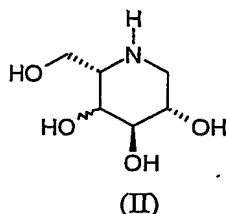
5. A compound of formula (I) as described in any one of Examples 1 to 4 or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or prodrug thereof.

6. A compound as defined in any one of the preceding claims for use in medicine.

7. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound of formula (I) as defined in any one of claims 1 to 5, together with one or more pharmaceutically acceptable carriers, excipients and/or diluents.

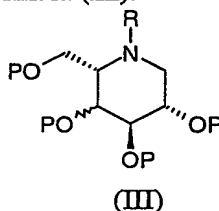
8. A process for the preparation of a compound of formula (I) as defined in any one of claims 1 to 5 which comprises:

a) reductive amination of an aldehyde of formula R⁴CHO wherein R⁴ is C₀₋₂ alkylAr¹ where Ar¹ is as defined in claim 1, with a compound of formula (II):



or

b) deprotection of a compound of formula (III):



wherein R is as defined in claim 1, and P, which may be the same or different, are hydroxy protecting groups.

9. The use of a compound of formula (I) as defined in any one of claims 1 to 5 in the manufacture of a medicament for use as an inhibitor of glucosylceramide synthase.

10. The use of a compound as defined in any one of claims 1 to 5 in the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment of a glycolipid storage disease.

11. The use as claimed in claim 10 wherein the glycolipid storage disease is Gaucher disease, Sandhoffs disease, Tay-Sachs disease, Fabry disease or GM1 gangliosidosis.

12. The use of a compound as defined in any one of claims 1 to 5, in the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment of Niemann-Pick disease type C, mucopolysaccharidosis type I, mucopolysaccharidosis type IIID, mucopolysaccharidosis type IIIA, mucopolysaccharidosis type VI, mucopolysaccharidosis type VII, α -mannosidosis or mucolipidosis type IV.

13. The use of a compound as defined in any one of claims 1 to 5, in the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment of neuronal cancer including neuroblastoma, brain cancer, renal adenocarcinoma, malignant melanoma, multiple myeloma and multi-drug resistant cancers.

14. The use of a compound as defined in any one of claims 1 to 5, in the manufacture of a medicament for use in the treatment of Alzheimer's disease, epilepsy, stroke, Parkinson's disease or spinal injury.

15. The use of a compound as defined in any one of claims 1 to 5, in the manufacture of a medicament for use in the treatment of disease caused by infectious microorganisms which utilize glycolipids on the surface of cells as receptors for the organism itself or toxins produced by the organism or disease caused by infectious organisms for which the synthesis of glucosylceramide is an essential or important process.

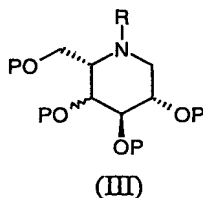
16. The use of a compound as defined in any one of claims 1 to 5, in the manufacture of a medicament for use in the treatment of diseases associated with abnormal glycolipid synthesis.

17. The use of a compound as defined in any one of claims 1 to 5, in the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment of a condition treatable by the administration of a ganglioside such as GM1 ganglioside.

18. The use of a compound as defined in any one of claims 1 to 5, in the manufacture of a medicament for use in reversibly rendering a male mammal infertile.

19. The use of a compound as defined in any one of claims 1 to 5, in the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment of obesity.

20. A compound of formula (III):



wherein R is as defined in claim 1, and P, which may be the same or different, are hydroxy protecting groups.